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THE THREE MUSKETEERS

MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS

The THREE MUSKETEERS

ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

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Alexandre Dumas

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Alexandre Dumas

The Three Musketeers

Adapted by
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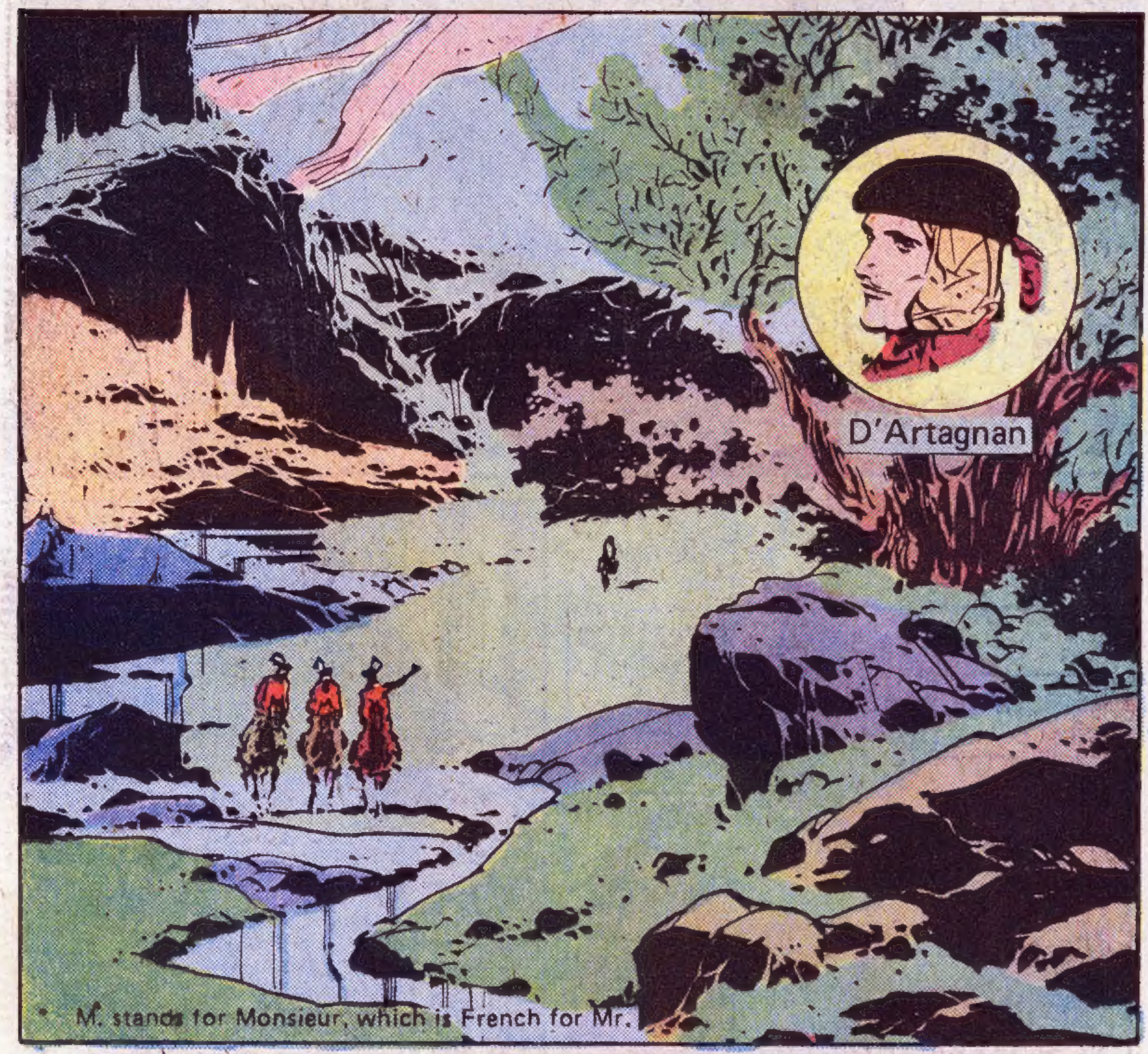
a VINCENT FAGO
production

Illustrated by
ALEX NINO

In France in 1627, one day in April, rode M. d'Artagnan, a very young gentleman whose greatest wish was to become one of the King's musketeers. He brought a letter from his father to M. de Treville, an old friend who was now Captain of the musketeers.*



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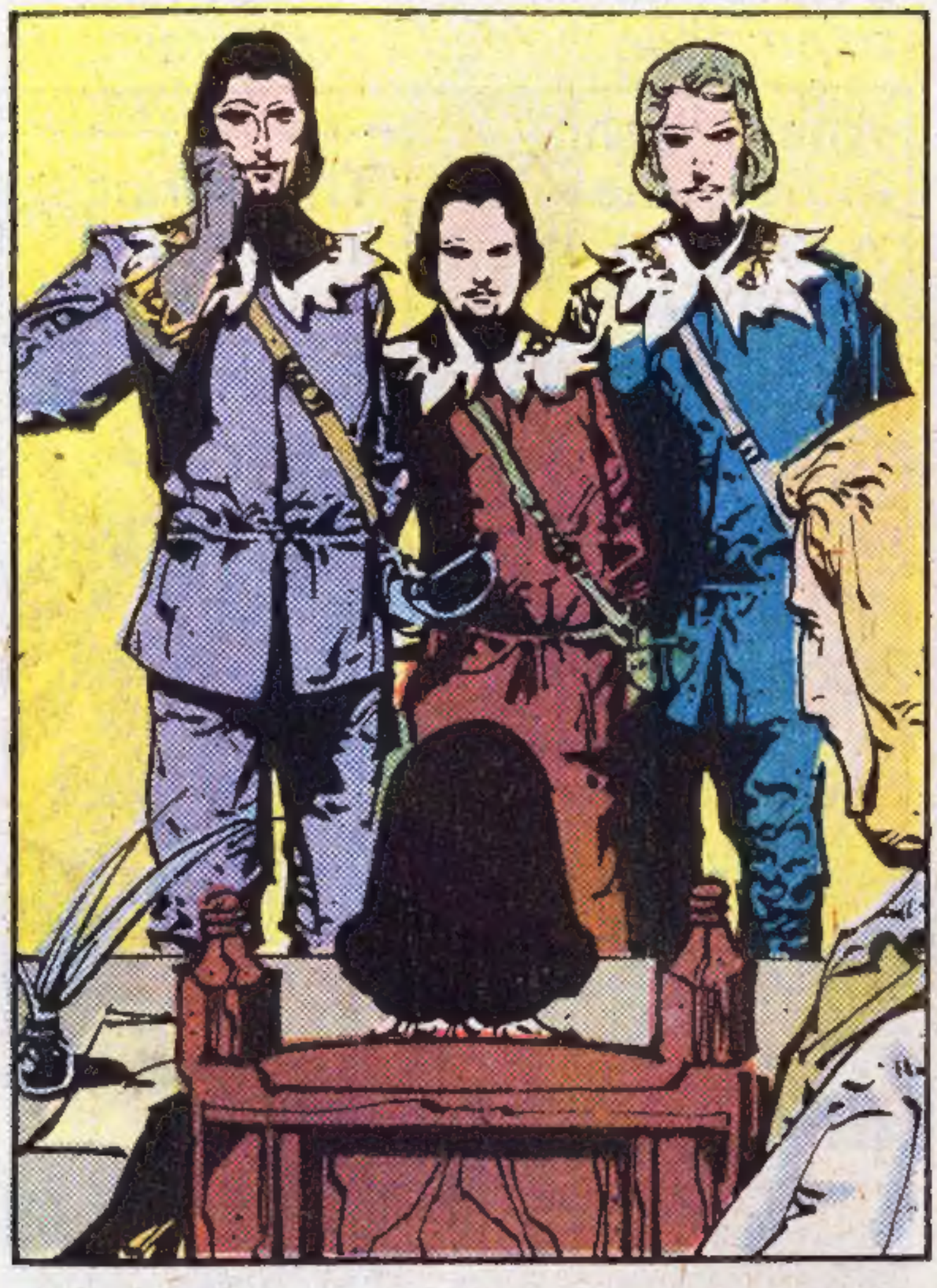
When he got to M. de Treville's house in Paris, the courtyard was filled with musketeers who paid no attention to him.

A servant took him to de Treville's office.



I hear that you were fighting in the street and were arrested by the cardinal's guards!

But, sir, we were arrested unfairly!

There were more of them, but we did not give up.

We were dragged away by force—but we escaped!

I will not allow you to risk your lives for no reason. The King needs all of his brave musketeers!

De Treville told the three men to go, then turned to d'Artagnan.

What I wish most in the world is to become a musketeer.

That is not impossible! However. . .

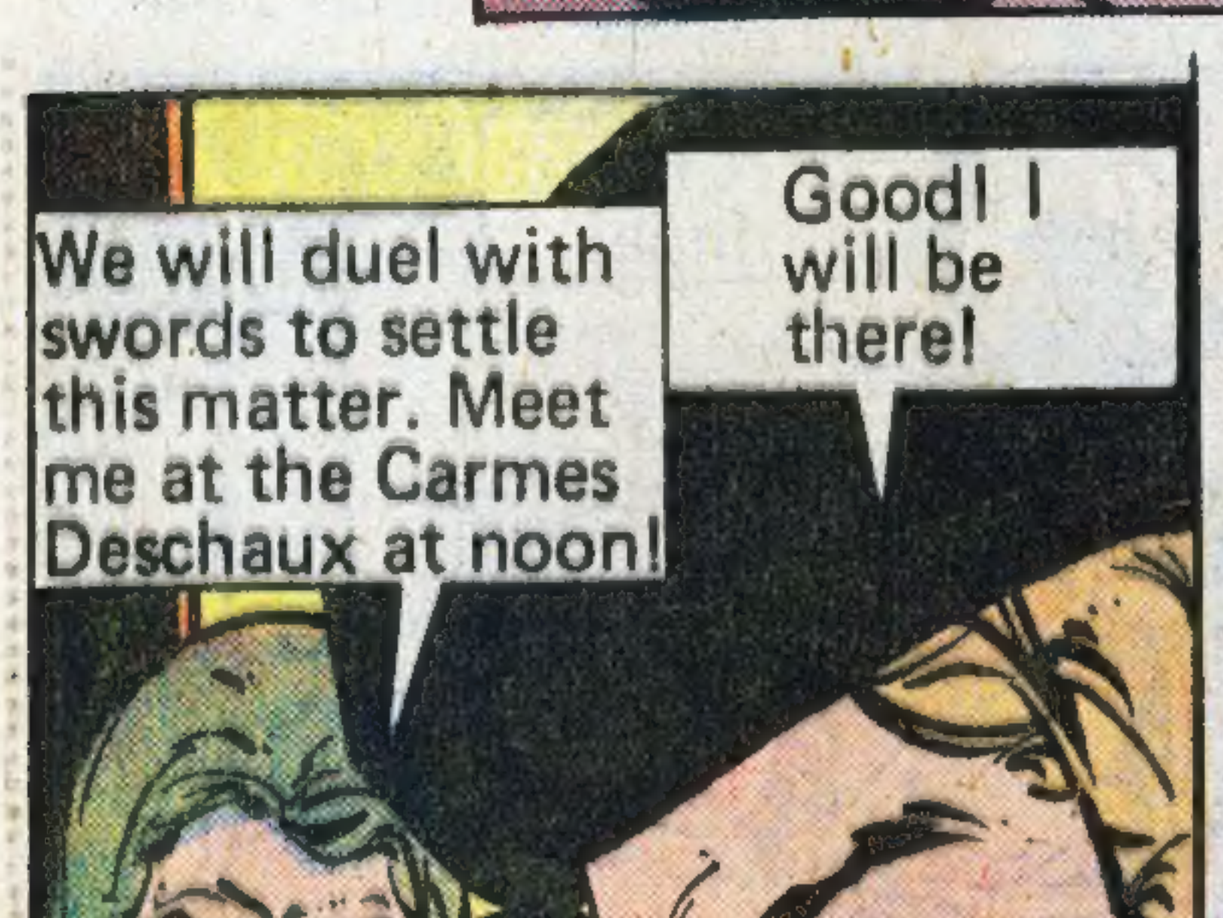
. . .no one becomes a musketeer without serving two years in a lesser regiment, except by performing some great deed!

I will do this for you. . .

I will get you into the Royal Military Academy. You will learn much there. And see me from time to time, to tell me how you are doing!

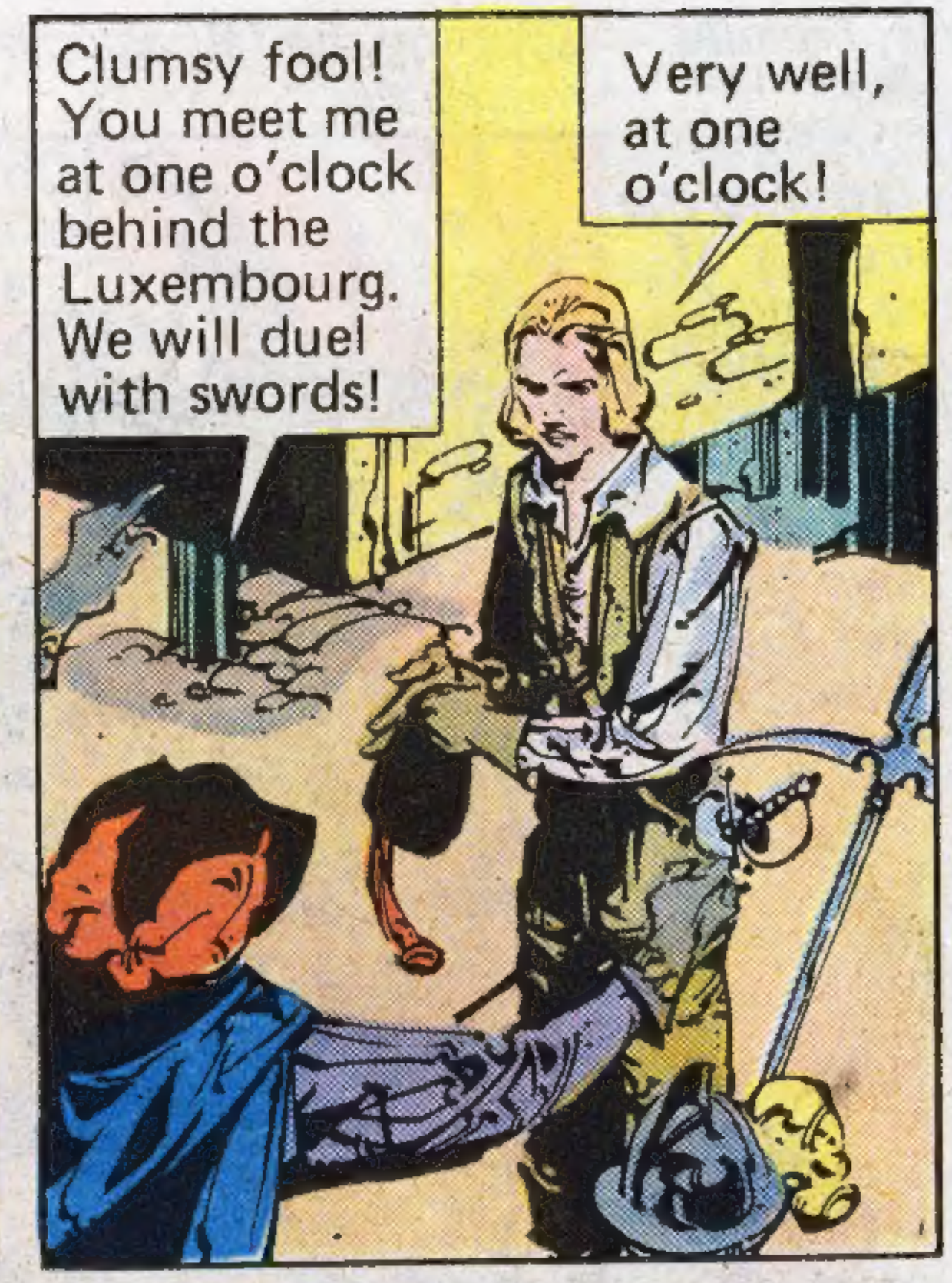
De Treville gave d'Artagnan a letter to the Director of the Royal Academy. Happy, d'Artagnan left, leaping down the stairs four at a time.

Slipping, he fell against a musketeer.



At the gate, d'Artagnan saw Porthos talking to the guard.

As he passed, the wind suddenly blew out Porthos' cloak and. . . .



Now, on the street, d'Artagnan saw Aramis talking with friends. Having already made two of the three musketeers he had seen in de Treville's office angry, he decided to be very polite and pleasant to the third one!

He approached Aramis with a deep bow and a smile. Then he saw that Aramis stood with one foot upon a fine, initialed handkerchief.

But it was under your foot!

Ah, ha! Do you still say you are not fond of the lovely lady who gave you this?

Aramis's friends left, laughing. He, turned on d'Artagnan.

If you are not a fool, sir, you should know that people do not walk on handkerchiefs without a reason!

I am begging your pardon, sir. Isn't that enough?

Sir, it is not enough. . .a lady's name is at stake. I will meet you at two o'clock at M. de Treville's house to arrange a duel.

I accept!

Since it was near noon, d'Artagnan took the road that would lead him to his first duel.

Three duels! I cannot back out; but at least, if I am killed, I'll be killed by a musketeer!

He found Athos waiting at the meeting place.

I am here, sir!

I have asked two friends to be seconds. Here they come now.

But I am to fight this gentleman. . . at one o'clock.

And I, at two o'clock.

But Athos has the right to kill me first! On guard!

But the two men had just crossed swords when Aramis cried out.

The cardinal's guards! Gentlemen, put away your swords!

What, musketeers fighting? And what of the laws against duelling? You are under arrest!

Shall we fight?

It is five against three.

Better to die on the spot than to face de Treville as beaten men!

Gentlemen, you miscount. There are four of us!

Drawing their swords, d'Artagnan and the three musketeers charged the swordsmen of the cardinal's guards.

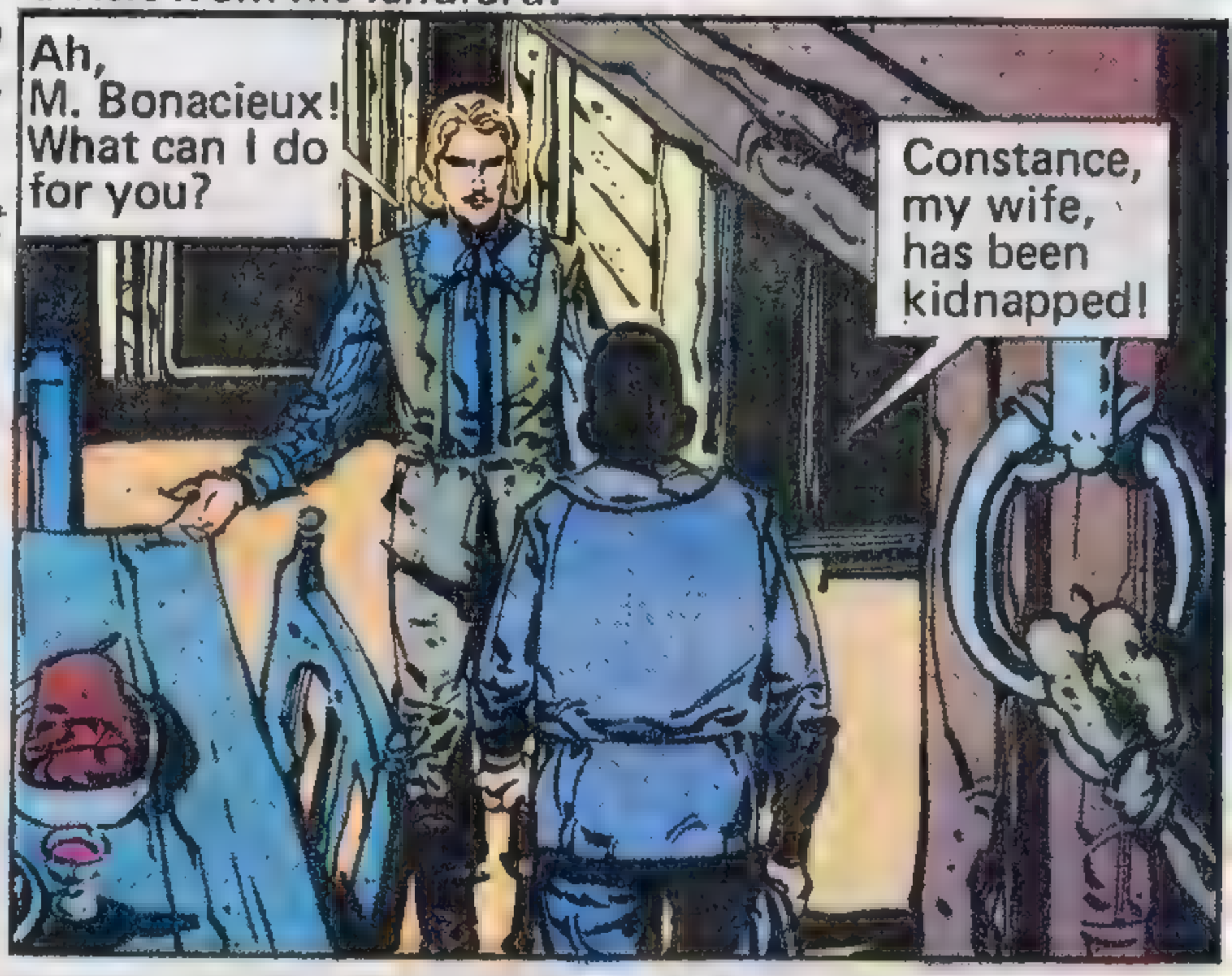
In this fight d'Artagnan proved himself skillful with his sword. Soon all the guards were dead, wounded, or overpowered; the musketeers took the road back to de Treville's.

They walked arm in arm. D'Artagnan's heart swelled with happiness.

If I am not yet a musketeer, at least I have begun my training!

From then on, the four men were united in a close friendship. When not together, they were looking out for one another. D'Artagnan learned from them something of life in Paris and at the Court. He became well-known and was brought to the notice of the King.

One day in his attic apartment, d'Artagnan received a visit from his landlord.

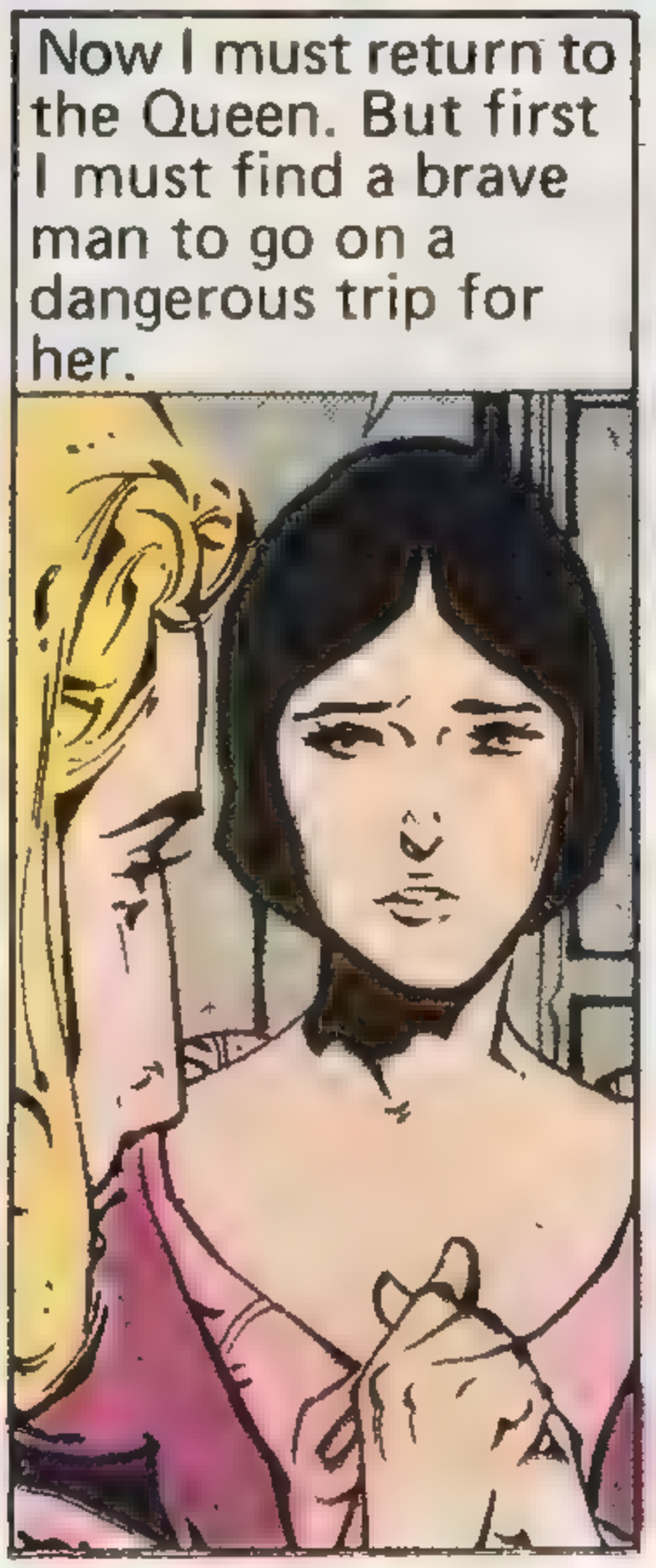


My wife is the Queen's seamstress. But more... she is one of the few loyal people whom the Queen can trust. She knows the Queen's secrets.

D'Artagnan thought about what he had heard of the unhappy Queen. The King cared nothing for her. The cardinal planned against her. The English Duke of Buckingham had fallen deeply in love with her, but the English were enemies of the French. Although the Queen was true to her husband, the Duke had given the cardinal a chance to get her into trouble.

As Bonacieux went one way and d'Artagnan started another, he heard noises. . . .

Inside, he found a lovely woman fighting off three men. He came to her aid and drove them away.



Then deliver this message to the Duke of Buckingham in London. It asks that he send back twelve diamond studs the Queen gave him.

The cardinal suspects the Queen. He has had the King insist she wear the studs at a Ball next week. If she does not, all is lost!

I shall go at once!

D'Artagnan went to tell his friends, who agreed to go with him.

One man is too easily caught by the cardinal's spies. Four men, shoulder to shoulder, might get through.

That is our motto, is it not? All for one, one for all!

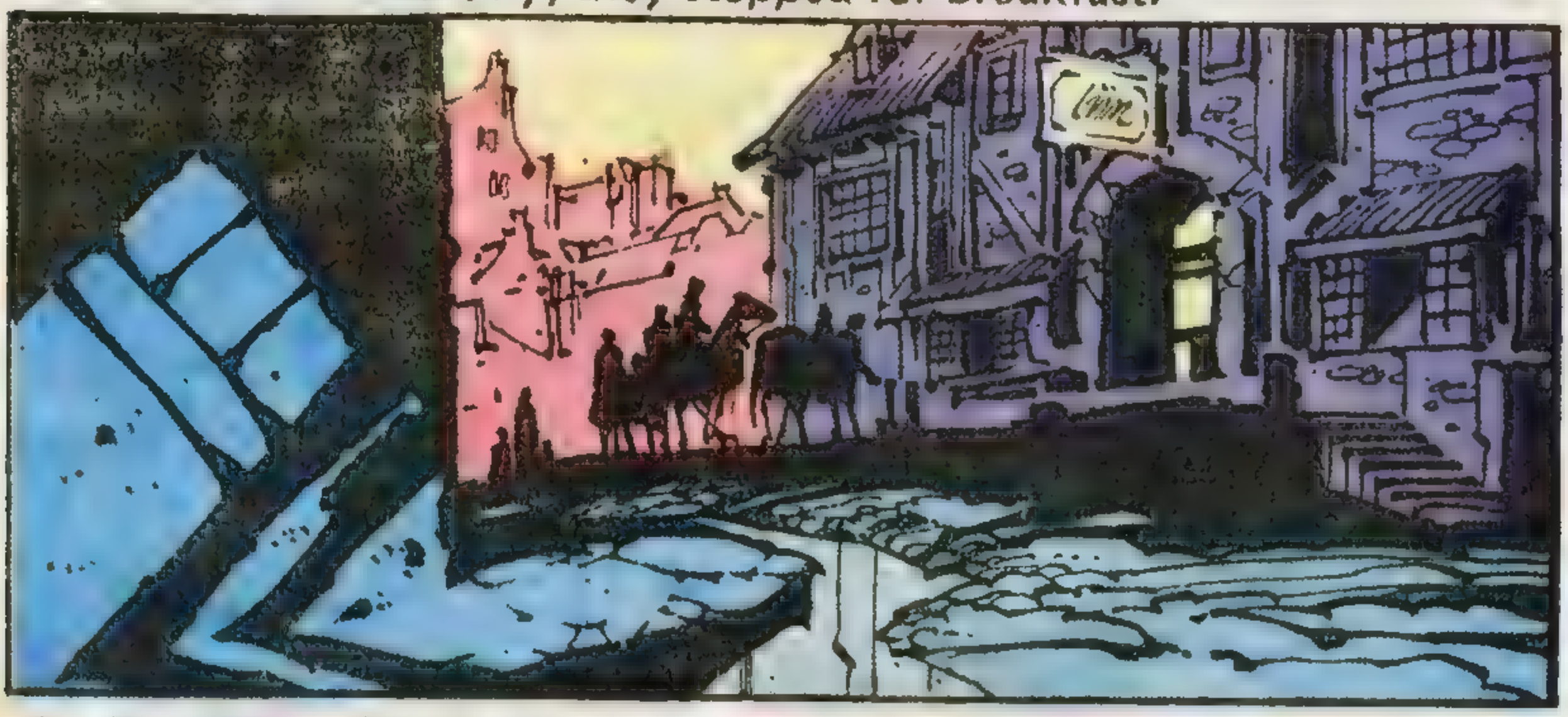
All for one, one for all!

At two o'clock in the morning, they left Paris.

The letter is here. If I should be killed, one of you must take it and ride on; if he be killed, it will be another's turn, and so on!

Bravo, d'Artagnan!

At the town of Chantilly, they stopped for breakfast.



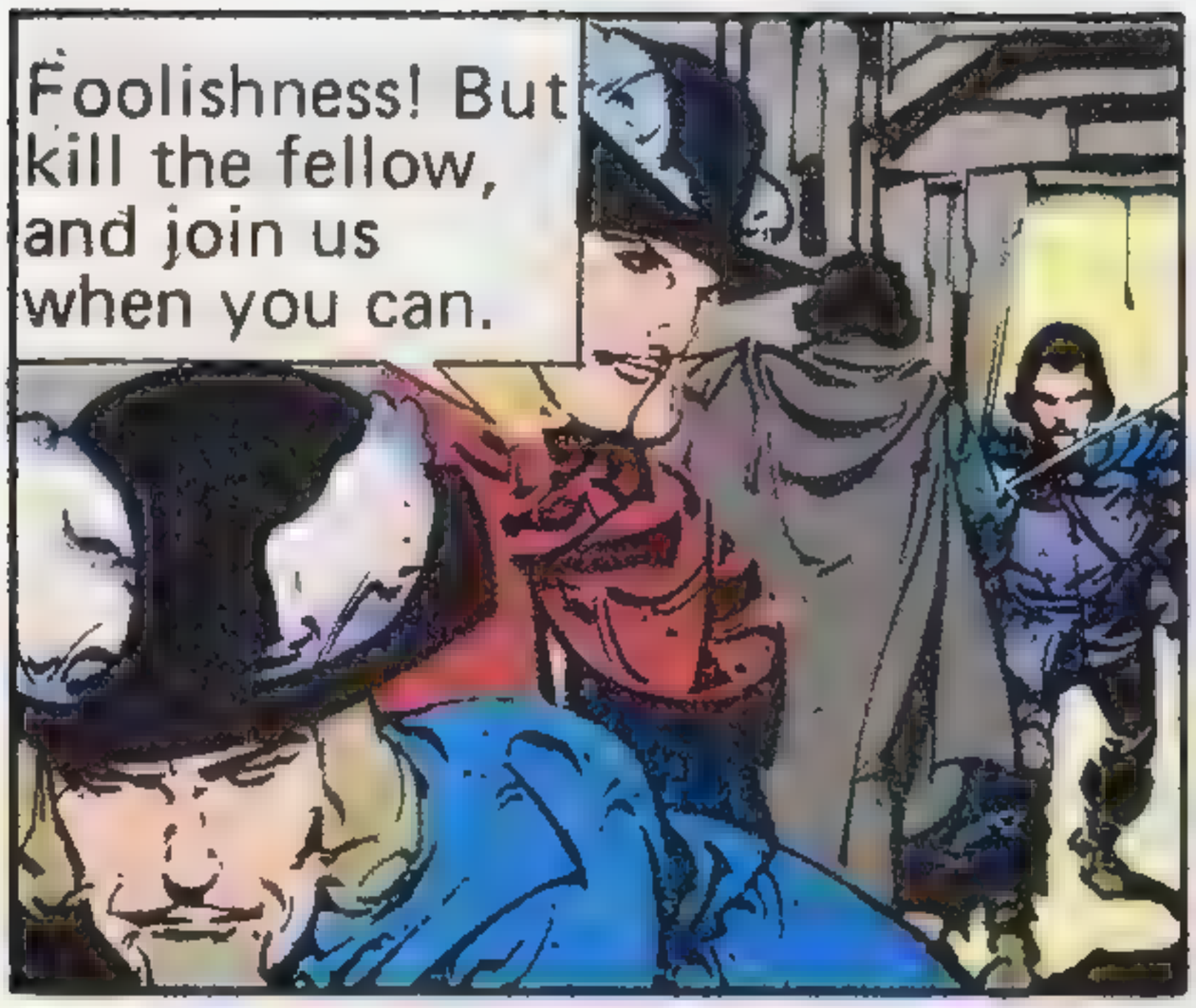
As they finished the meal, a stranger came up to them.

A toast to the cardinal!

If you, in turn, will drink to the King's health!

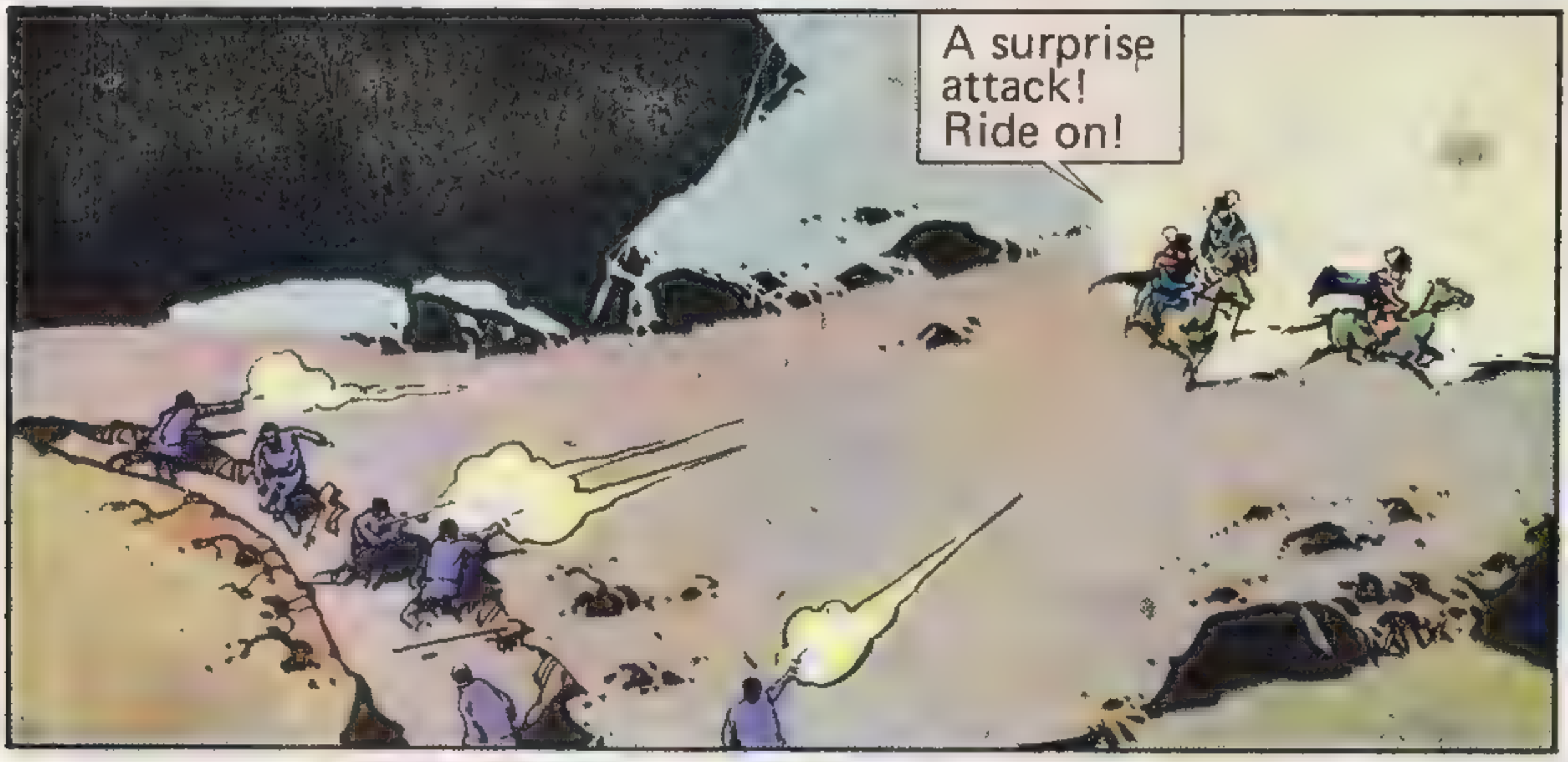
There is no other King but the cardinal!

Sir, you are drunk!

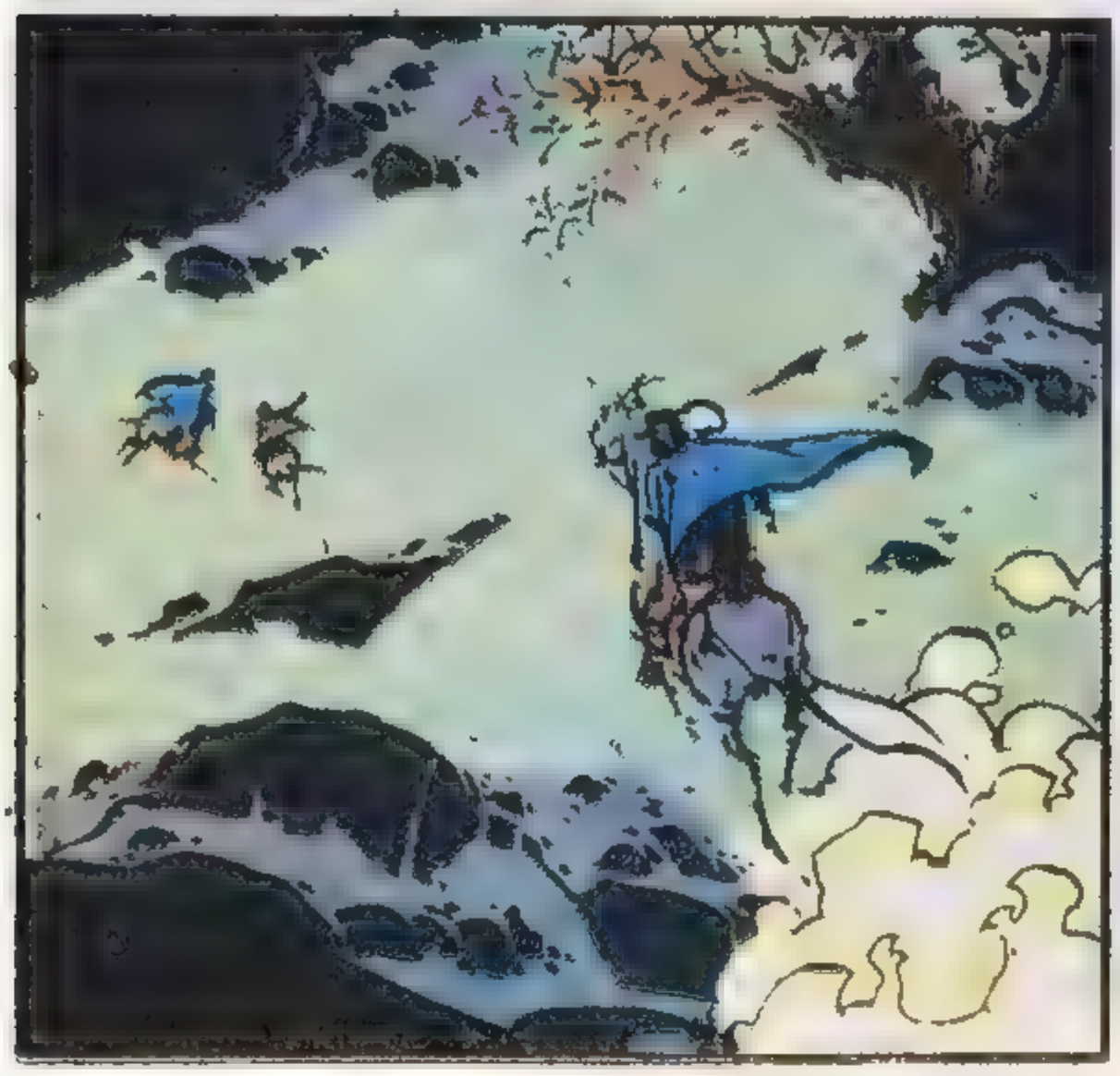


The three men went on. Near Beauvais, they came upon a group of road workers.

Suddenly the men jumped into a ditch, took up muskets, and fired on the three friends.



Aramis, though wounded, rode on with the others.



But later he could go no further.

At midnight, Athos and d'Artagnan stopped at an inn. The next morning Athos went into the office to pay the bill.

The innkeeper shouted. Armed guards rushed in and fell upon Athos.

D'Artagnan leaped on his horse and rode on, alone. Reaching the port of Calais, he saw another traveler just ahead.*

I must cross to England at once.

We had orders, this morning that no one can cross without the cardinal's permission.

I have such permission here!

You must have it stamped by the port governor. He lives just through the woods there.

The man started off. D'Artagnan followed.

Sir, a moment, please!

* a French seaport

I must reach London quickly. I want the order you carry!

You must be joking! Let me pass!

In three seconds, d'Artagnan had wounded him three times.

Sorry, but I must have the order you carry!

The man fell unconscious. D'Artagnan took the order from his pocket.

For Athos, for Porthos, and for Aramis!

Now for the *Governor* !

The passport signed, d'Artagnan had no more trouble in reaching London. There, he went to the Duke.

Great Heavens! I will get the studs at once.

I had promised the diamond studs would be buried with me! But I will obey the Queen's wish.

All is lost! Two of the diamond studs are missing. . .

Stolen?

The only time I wore them was at a ball last week. Countess de Winter made an excuse to talk to me for some time!

But why should she. . .?

She is a spy of the cardinal! She must have taken them.

What can be done? The ball is in five days.

That will be enough time to have copies made.

The Duke put his jeweler to work. Two days later, d'Artagnan was ready to return to France with twelve diamond studs.

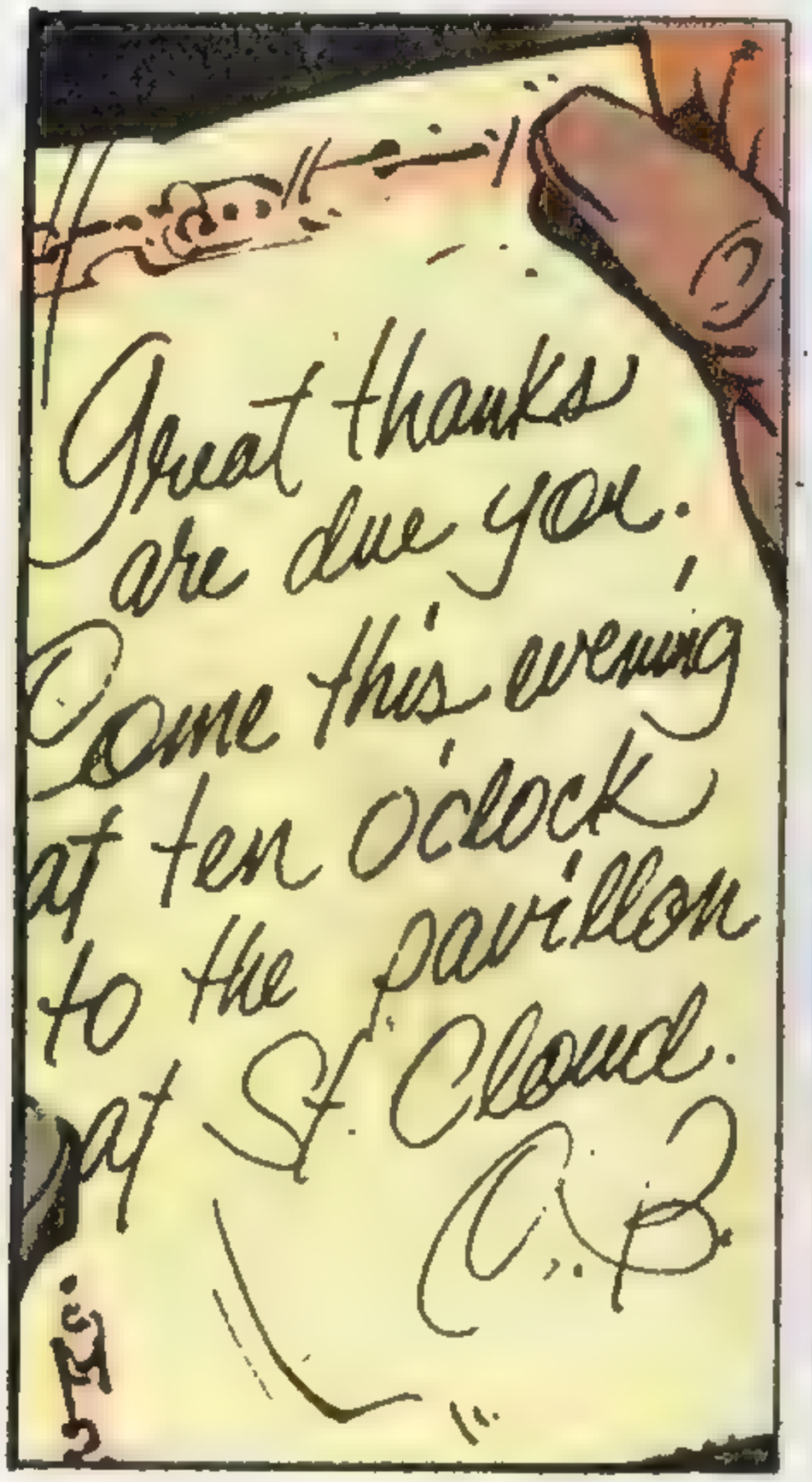
How can I ever thank you for what you have done?

D'Artagnan returned to Paris safely and gave the diamonds to Madame Bonacieux. And the next evening the King and Queen received the cardinal at a great ball.

My diamonds are very lovely . . . are they not? All twelve of them!

Indeed, yes, your majesty!

The *next day, d'Artagnan received a message.*



He went to St. Cloud and waited. At 11 o'clock he grew uneasy.

Sure that Mme. Bonacieux had been carried off again, he went to de Treville with the story.

The cardinal is a dangerous enemy! You must leave Paris for a while.
But I must find Mme. Bonacieux! If only my friends were here to help.

There is nothing you can do. I will tell the Queen. She may be able to help.

Then I will go and look for my friends.

D'Artagnan went to Chantilly, to the inn where he had left Porthos.

Can you tell me what has happened to my friend?

M. Porthos? He is here, recovering from a chest wound.

He lost his money gambling with another guest. . . he owes a terrible bill. . . .

When I ask him to pay, he says he will blow my brains out! Please take him away!

D'Artagnan! Welcome! Did you hear my story? I slipped on a stone and sprained my ankle.

Indeed?

Otherwise I should have killed the devil I was fighting with!

As you are well cared for, I will go find the others. We'll call for you coming back.

Yes, I'm fine. The landlord is afraid of me!

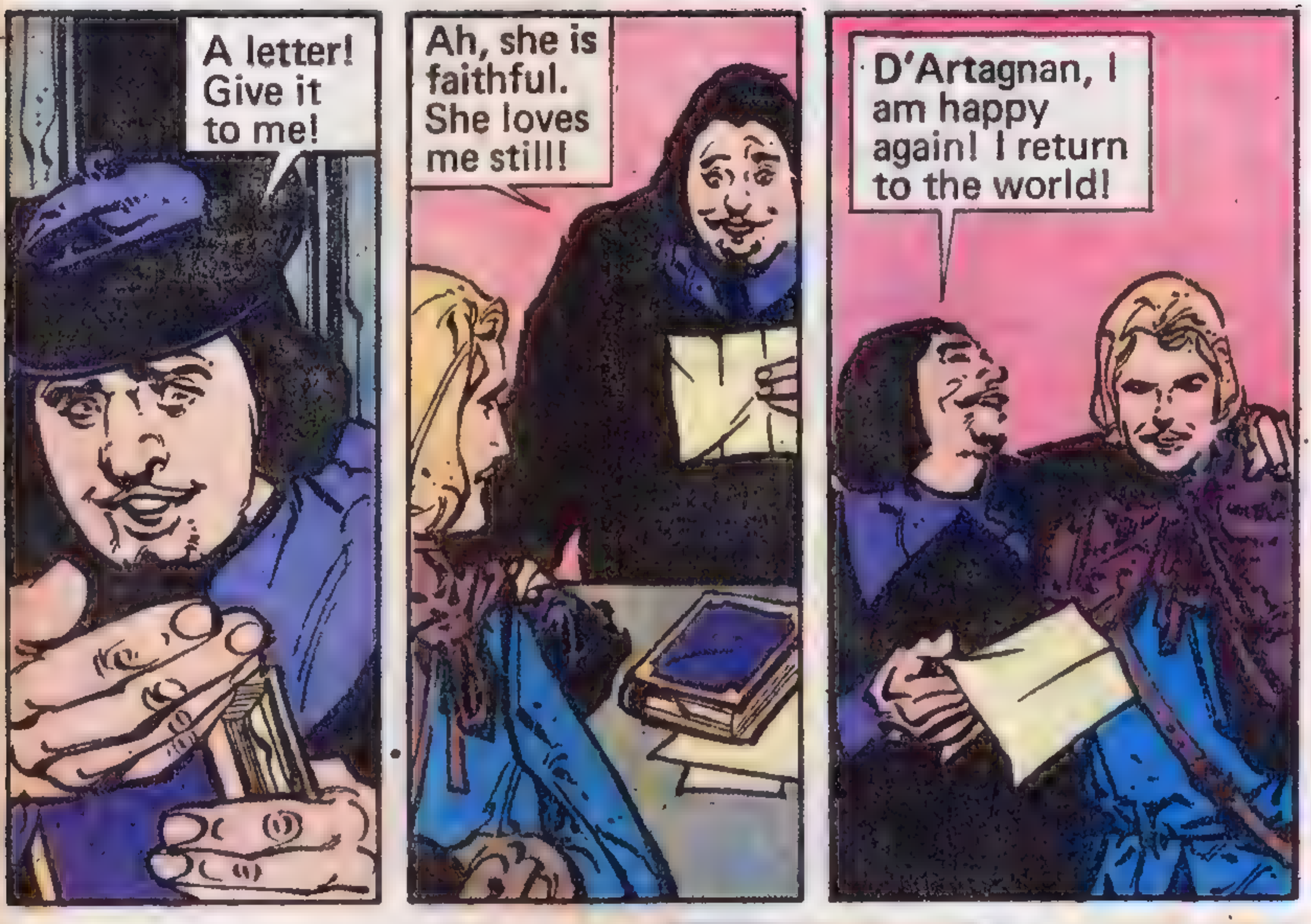
At a second inn, he found Aramis.

Is this Aramis, or am I in the room of a churchman?

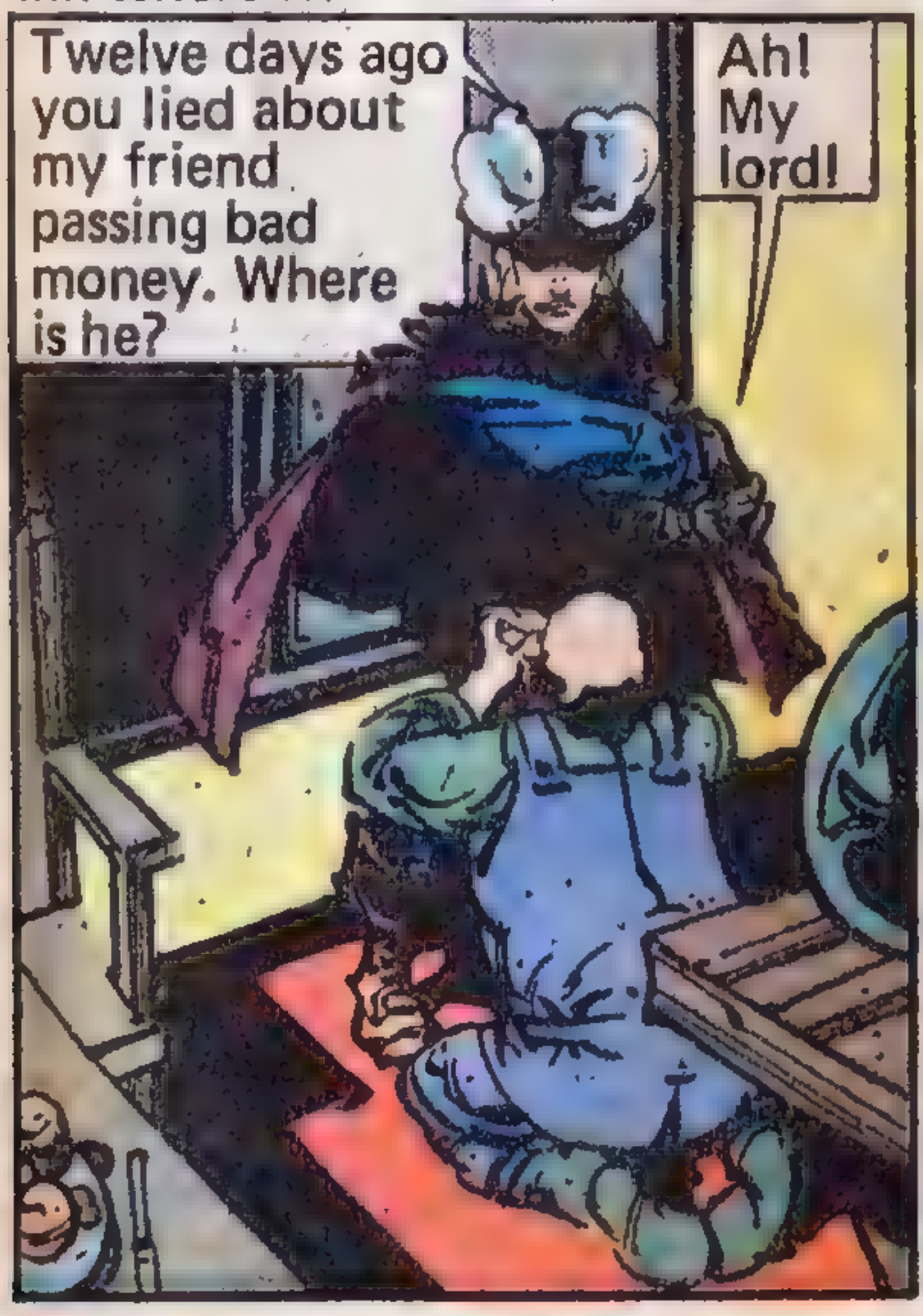
I have long planned to take holy orders. Now I do so!

I give up the world... especially love!

Then let us burn this letter I brought you... from some heartbroken woman.



As Aramis had not completely recovered, d'Artagnan went on alone. Angrily he entered the inn where he had left Athos.



He fought like a tiger! He shut himself up in the cellar.

He is a prisoner there?

No! He will not come out! He will not let us in! All our supplies are there, and we cannot serve our customers. In another week I will be broke!

D'Artagnan went to the cellar.

Athos, open the door.

D'Artagnan! For you, at once!

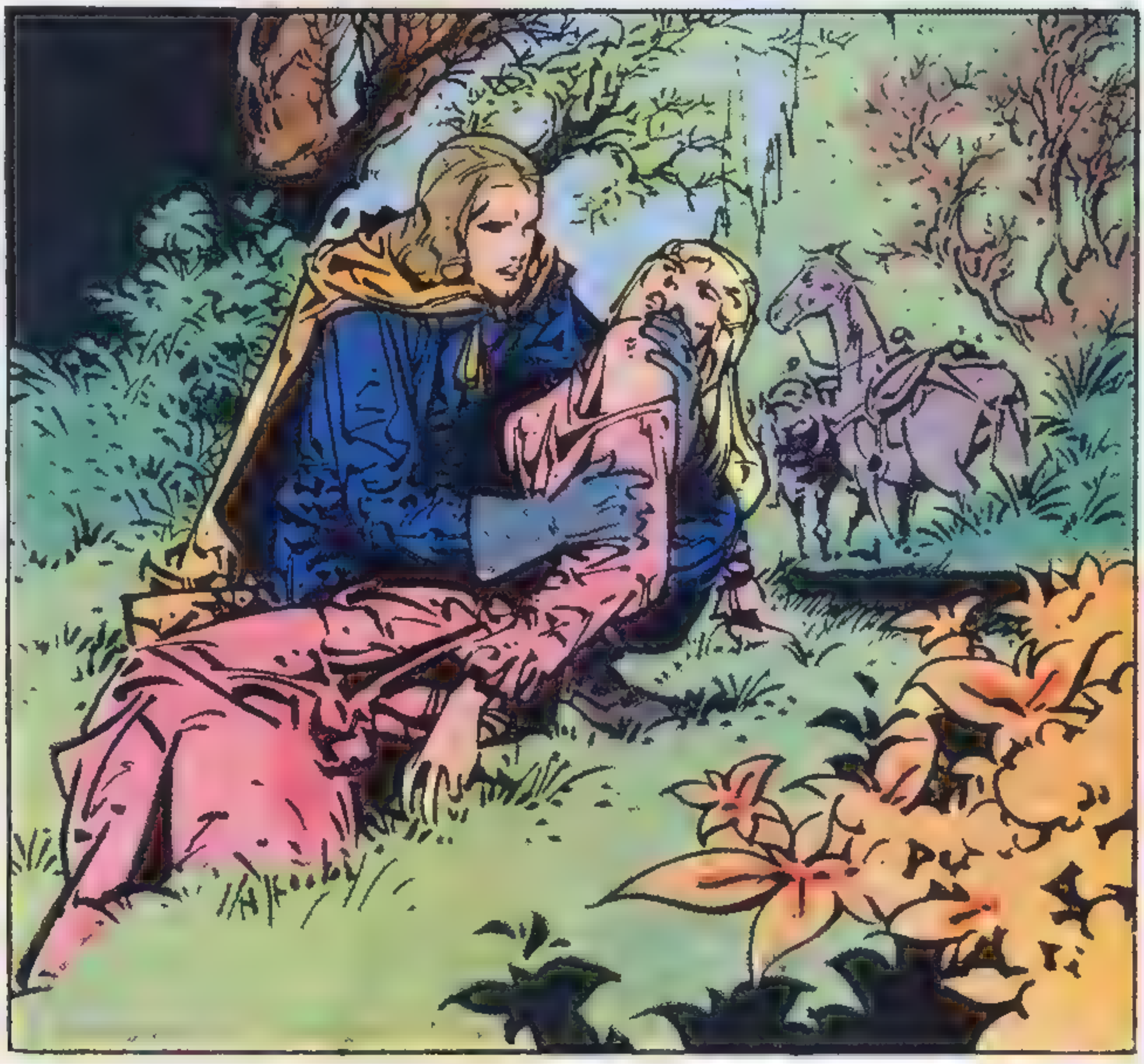
Come, let us drink and talk.

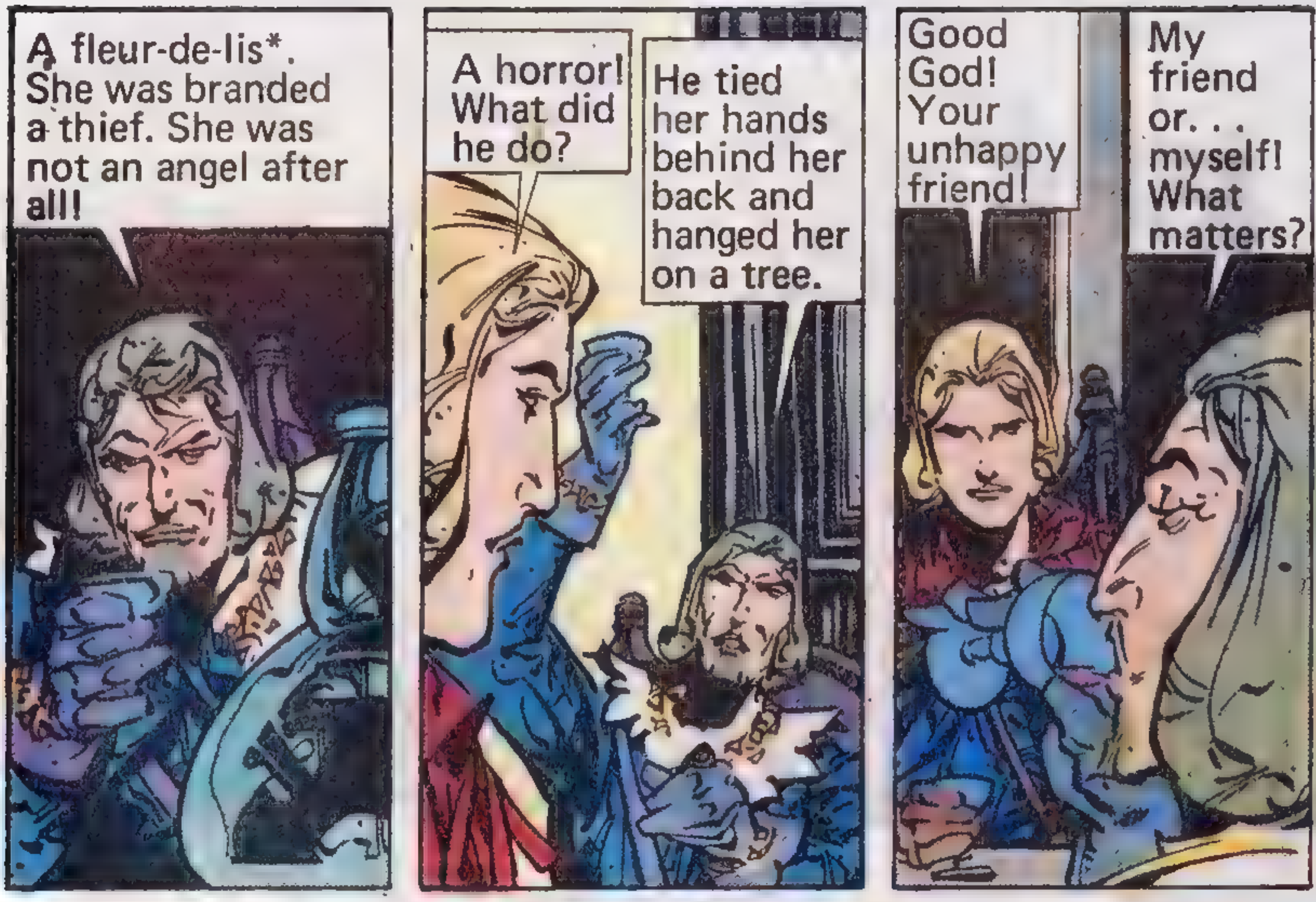
I will tell you a tale of love . . .about a Count who fell in love with a beautiful young girl.

She lived with her brother, a parish priest. They were unknown, penniless. . .but she was so lovely; her brother so good, who could not trust them?

The young Count could have taken her and carried her away, but he was an honorable man. He married her and made her his Countess.

One day when they were hunting, she fell from her horse and fainted. The Count loosened her dress, and what do you think he found on her shoulder?




A fleur-de-lis*. She was branded a thief. She was not an angel after all!
A horror! What did he do?
He tied her hands behind her back and hanged her on a tree.
Good God! Your unhappy friend!
My friend or. . . myself! What matters?

The next day d'Artagnan and Athos set out for Paris, stopping on the way for Aramis and Porthos. At home, there was news.

Out riding one day, d'Artagnan came upon a beautiful lady in a parked carriage.

* French royal flower

Madame, may I offer my services? It appears that this gentleman has angered you!

I should welcome your protection, were not this gentleman my brother-in-law.

My pardon . . . I did not know!

I am Lady de Winter. Perhaps you will call upon me at my home nearby?

As the carriage rolled on, d'Artagnan looked after it thoughtfully.

Can this be the cardinal's spy? The Milady de Winter who stole the diamonds from the Duke of Buckingham?

Hoping to learn more news of Constance Bonacieux, d'Artagnan accepted Lady de Winter's invitation. He called several times in the next few days. At last, one night, he overheard her talking to her maid.

If you hate d'Artagnan so, milady, why ask him to call?

There is something to settle between us that he does not know. He very nearly made me lose credit with the cardinal over the diamond studs!

I will pay him back for that!

You were at least partly paid by having Madame Bonacieux kidnapped.

Monster! What have you done with Constance Bonacieux?

D'Artagnan!

D'Artagnan grabbed milady by the shoulder. As she pulled away, her gown tore.

Great God! The fleur-de-lis! You are branded!

She turned upon him like a wounded animal.

Wretch! You know my secret! You shall die!

Shocked, d'Artagnan ran from the house and half across Paris.

He did not stop until he came to Athos' door.

How pale you are! Are you wounded?

I have just made an awful discovery. Milady is branded with the fleur-de-lis on her shoulder!

The other. . .the woman you told me about. . .are you sure she is dead?

Is she tall, fair, blue-eyed? The fleur-de-lis, small and red?

Yes, yes!

She must somehow have set herself free. Now, as a spy of the cardinal, she continues her evil ways.

I fear that she will now try to get even with the two of us.

For myself, I care not. But you, my friend, do not go out alone; be careful of what you eat; don't trust even your own shadow!

It is only for another day: With the army, we should have only men to fear!

Two days later, the troops marched from Paris toward La Rochelle to fight the English. D'Artagnan's small unit went forward as part of the advance guard. The King, becoming ill, stopped at Villeroi; and as always, the musketeers stayed with the King. So d'Artagnan was separated from his three friends.

Several days later, after a night in the fields, d'Artagnan returned to his inn.

Wine, sir... a gift from Messieurs Athos, Porthos, and Aramis.

Good! They thought of me as they drank the famous Anjou wines!

About to taste the wine, he heard noise and cheers from outside.

The musketeers are coming with the King!

. . .

D'Artagnan went out to meet his friends.

You come at a good time! I was about to drink the wine you sent.

What wine?

We sent you no wine!

'They hurried to d'Artagnan's room where they found. . . .

He's dead!

The wine was poisoned! Milady must have sent it.

You see, it is war to the death! Take care!

One night, out riding from their camp, the three musketeers came upon a horseman.

The musketeers rode with the cardinal to an inn

As they waited, Athos walked restlessly.

Through the stovepipe, he heard voices.

You will sail for England tomorrow morning.

You will go to the Duke of Buckingham and tell him that I have proofs of his meetings with the Queen. . .and that I will make them known unless he ends this war.

And if he refuses?

Then a way must be found to kill him!

I will find a way. In return, I want the death of one of my enemies . . .d'Artagnan.

Very well. Give me pen and paper.

This will approve whatever you do.

It is by my order and for the good of the state that the bearer of this has done what he has done.

3rd December, 1627

Richelieu

A few minutes later, the cardinal returned.

Let us go, gentlemen. Where is M. Athos?

Gone ahead to see that the road is safe.

But when the others left, Athos returned.

Who are you? What do you want?

The Count de la Fere, Madame, once your husband!

Give me that paper from the cardinal or I will blow out your brains.

Take it and be damned!

Now I have spoiled your evil plans!

The next day the musketeers met d'Artagnan for breakfast. Swiss guards and musketeers crowded into the inn.

Something has happened?

We can't have a private talk here!

Ho, guard! Did you not take a fort last night?

We blew up part of the fort of St. Gervais.

The enemy will probably send men this morning to repair and hold it.

I'll bet my friends and I can go and breakfast there. We will stay there an hour, whatever the enemy may do!

He is going to get us all killed.

No, this will give us a chance to talk in private without being suspected!

Carrying their breakfast, they soon reached the fort.

I saw Milady last night.

Athos told him what had happened the night before.

We must write to Lord de Winter, her brother-in-law, to warn him of her plans to kill Buckingham.

We will do it!

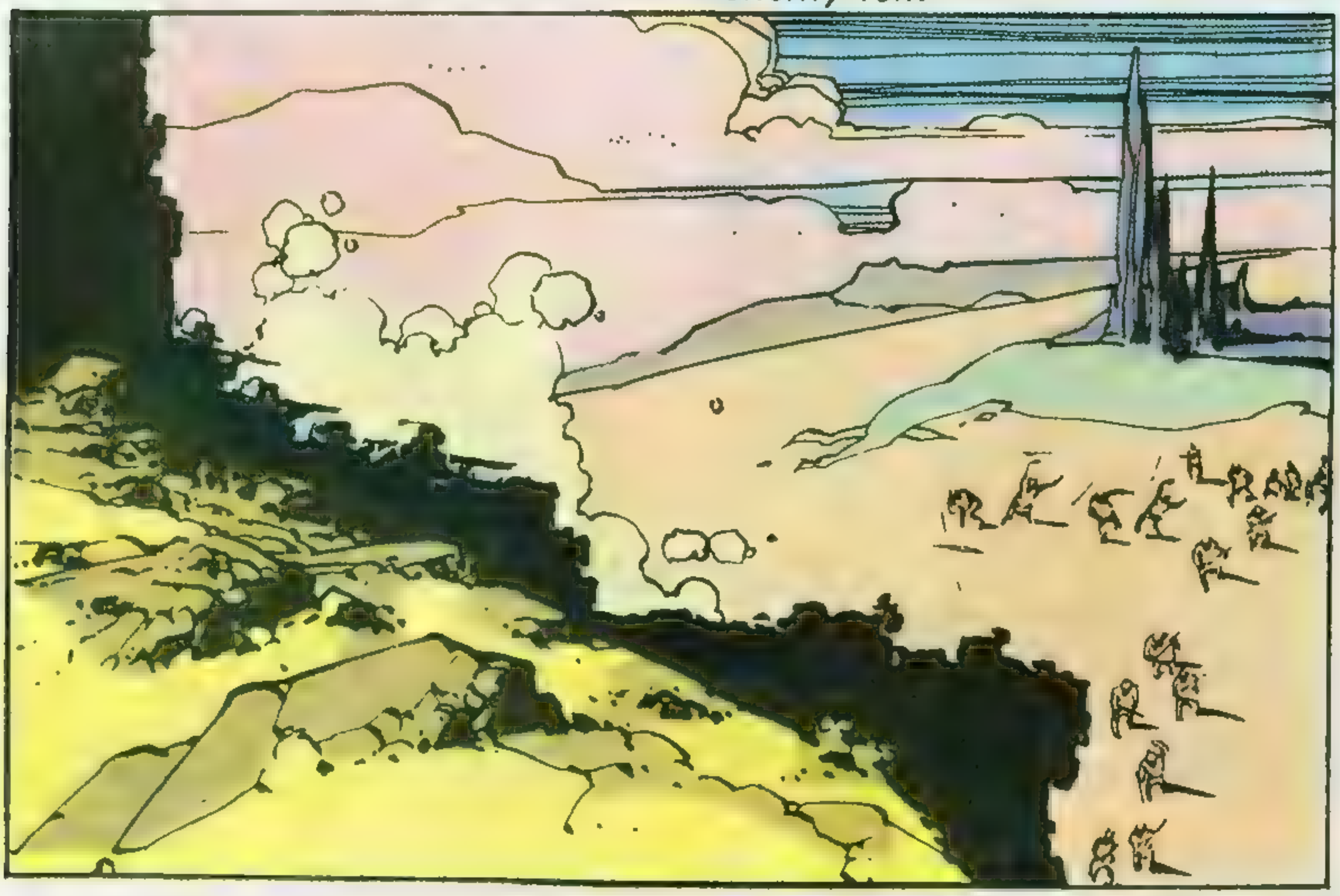
Suddenly. . . .

Some twenty of the enemy approach.

We are having breakfast. Please wait till we have finished.

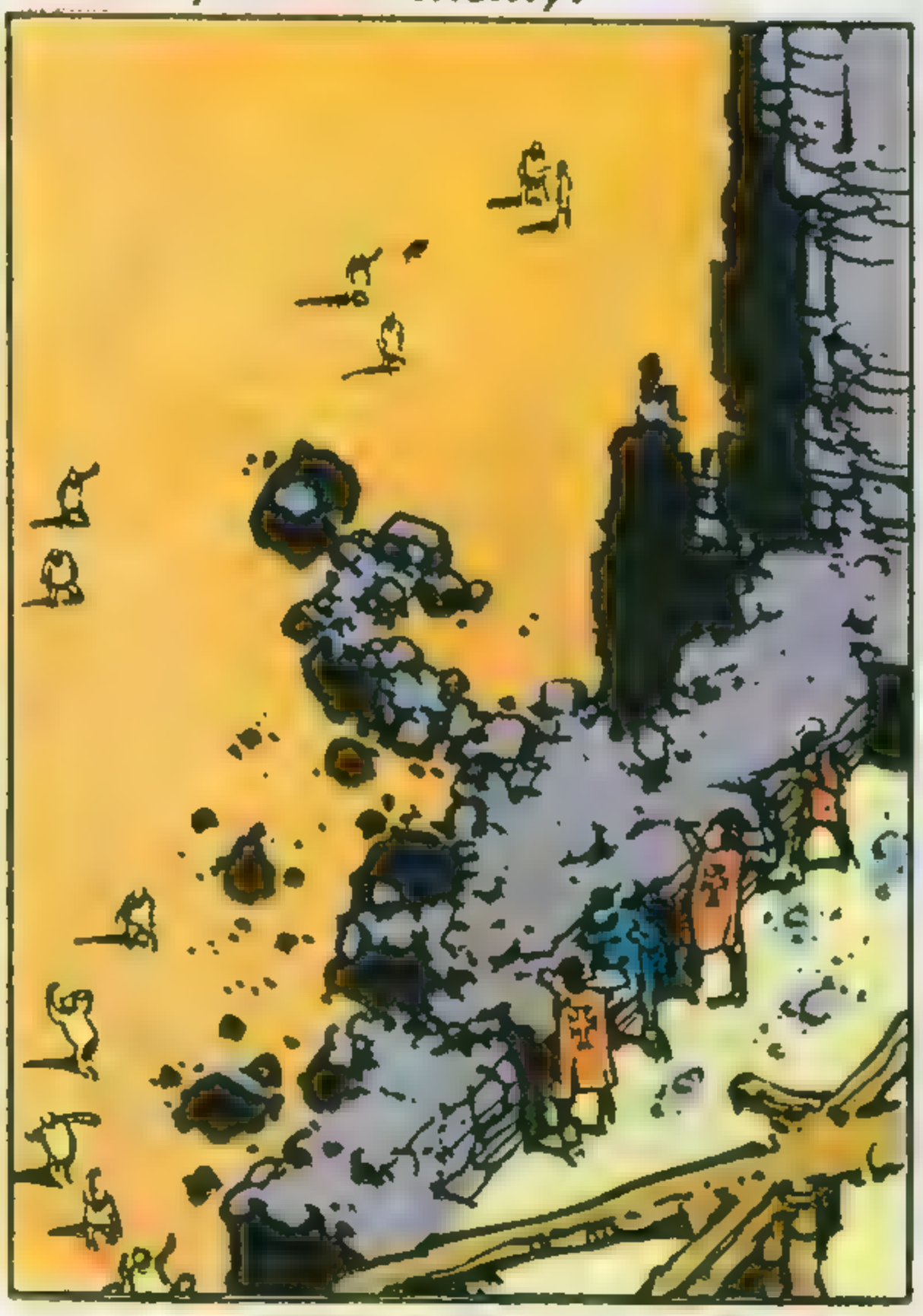
Several bullets struck the wall around Athos.

The four friends fired and four of the enemy fell.



In spite of the shots coming from the Frenchmen, a dozen enemy troops reached the foot of the wall.

At a push from the four friends, a great sheet of wall fell with a crash upon the enemy.



That finishes it! Now as we've been here an hour, let us go back and collect our bet!

The four men returned to camp as heroes. And because of his part in the event, d'Artagnan was made a musketeer.

The dream of my life has come true!

Soon Milady arrived in England. Because of the musketeer's letter to de Winter, she was met by a naval officer.

She was taken to a fine house and into a room with barred windows.

Please come with me.

I am a prisoner! What does this mean?

Lord de Winter appeared in the doorway.

Leave us, Master Felton.

I know what brings you to England. But you shall not succeed!

In a week I will have an order to send you thousands of miles from England. Until then, here you stay!

Alone, Milady walked the floor, as angry as could be.

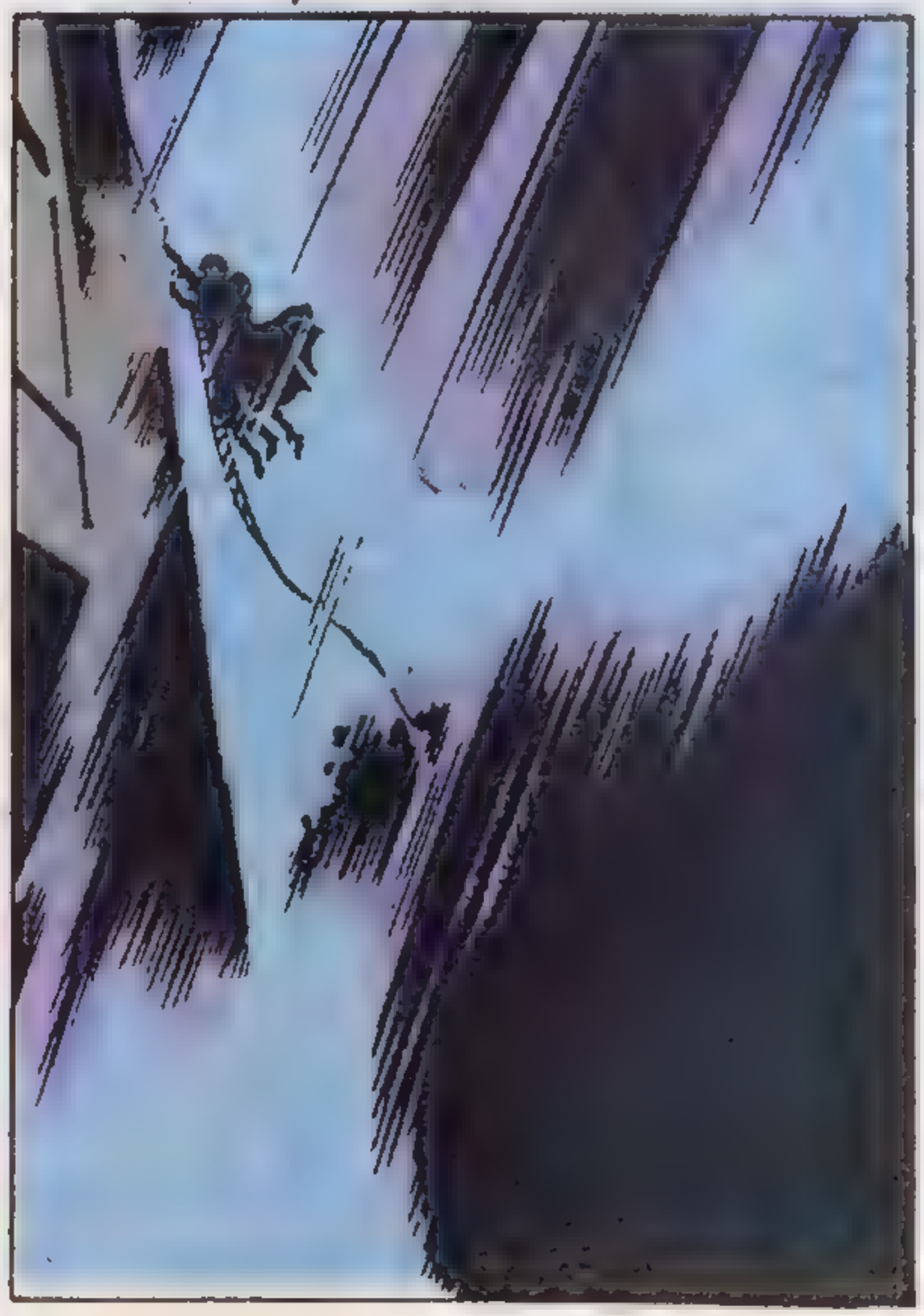
All this I owe to d'Artagnan! The affair with the studs, my awful secret, and now a prisoner! Oh, to get even!

To get d'Artagnan, I must be free! The officer who brought me here . . .he looks young and innocent. . . perhaps. . . .

Fooled by her beauty, Felton believed her lies and agreed to help her. During a storm, the night she was to be sent away, she heard a tap at the window.

When he had finished. . . .

Slowly they climbed down Felton's rope ladder.



Felton led Milady to the sea.

And you?

I must find the Duke of Buckingham. He plans to sail for La Rochelle tomorrow.

He must not sail!

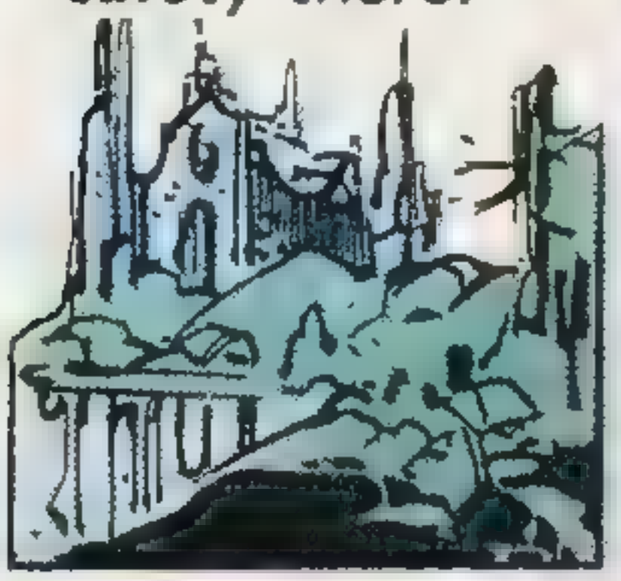
We will make sure that he will not!

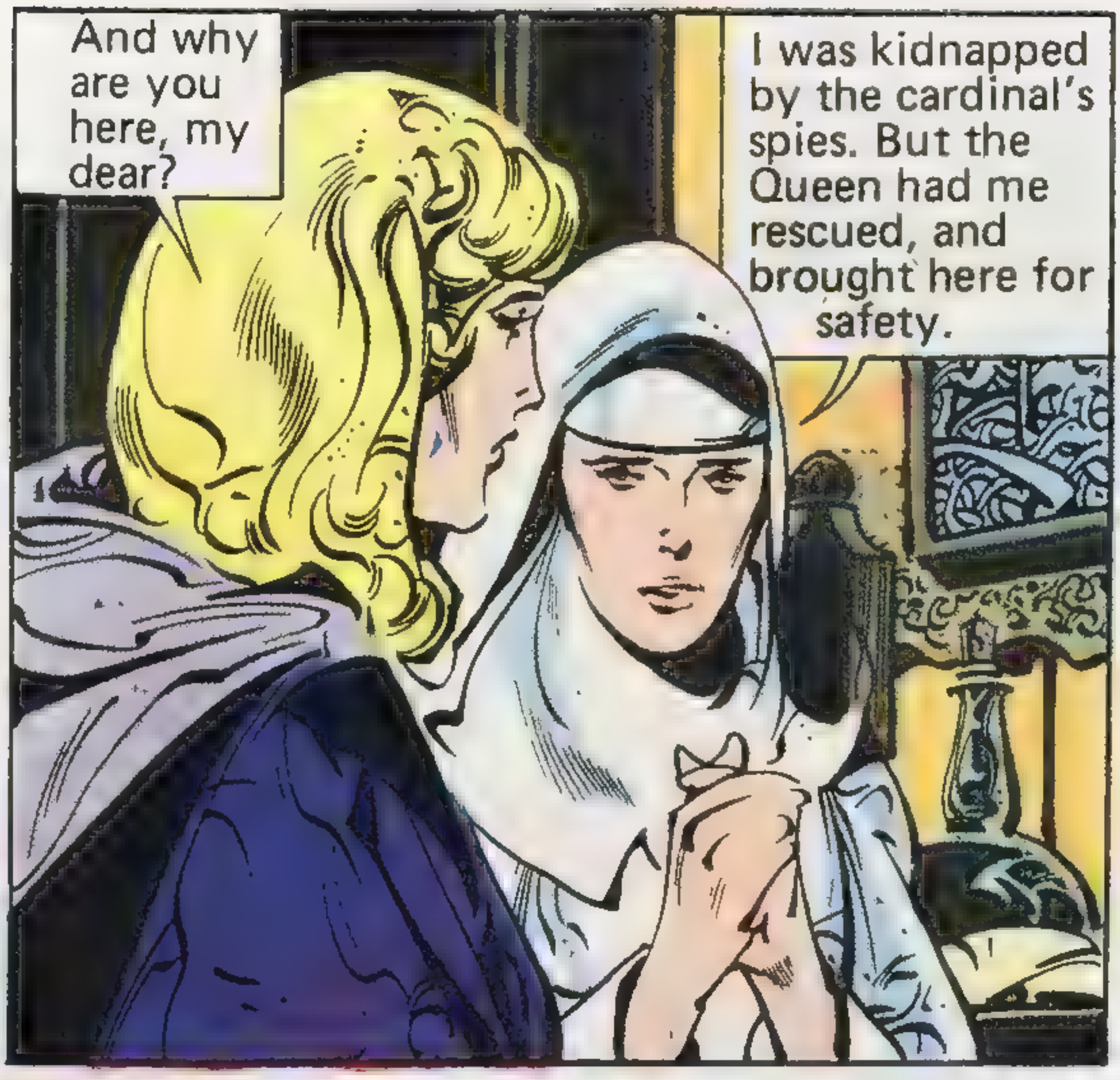
The next day Felton found the Duke of Buckingham. . .and plunged his knife into the Duke's side!

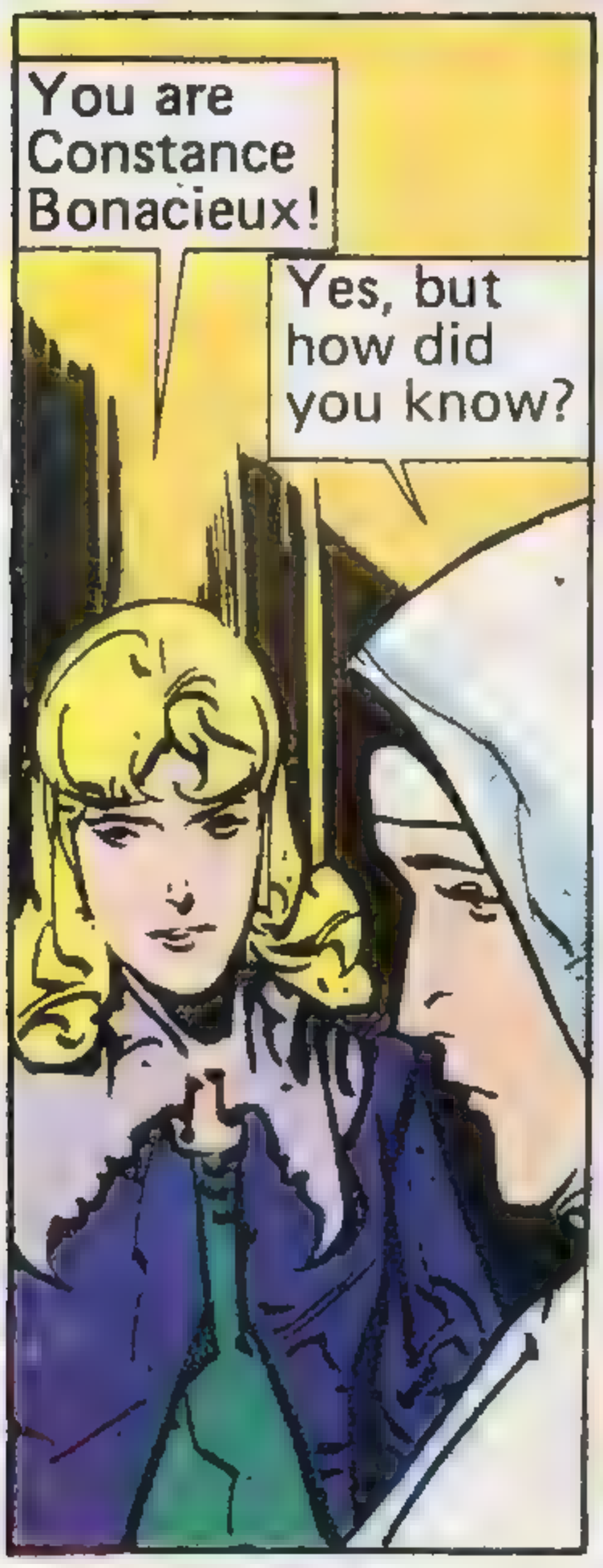
Ah! Traitor! You have killed me.

You are in God's hands!

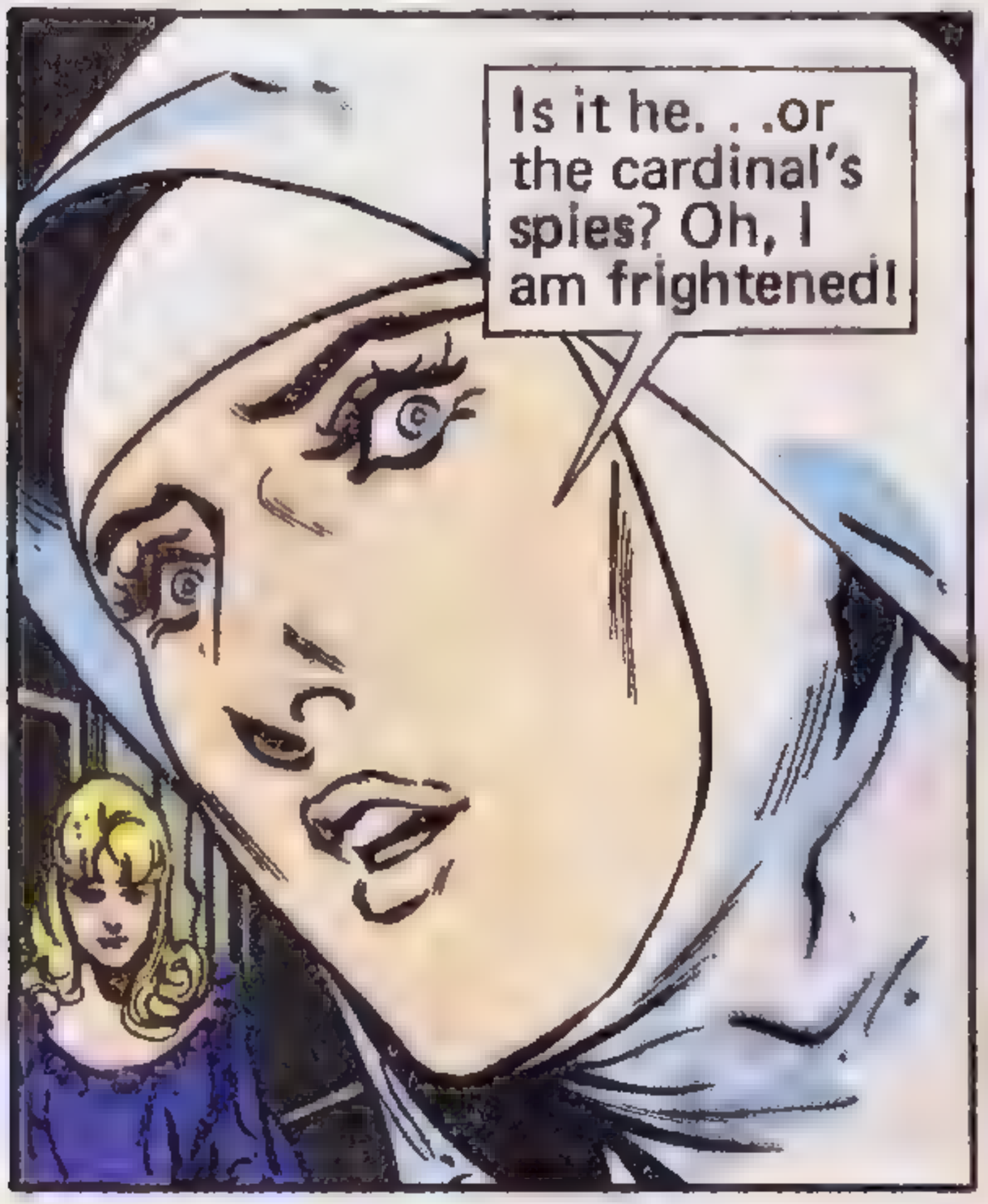
The four musketeers, on leave continued their search for Constance Bonacieux. Milady, reaching France, went to a convent to await orders from the cardinal. She met another young woman who had found safety there.




And why are you here, my dear?
I was kidnapped by the cardinal's spies. But the Queen had me rescued, and brought here for safety.



Suddenly a clatter of hoofs was heard.



Secretly Milady poured a reddish powder into a glass of wine.

Constance drank and sank to the ground, as Milady fled.

Athos spoke to the Mother Superior.

We leave this lady's body to your holy care. We will return later to pray at her grave.

Wait for me at the inn. I have a job to do.

Later he came back with a tall, masked man.

He led the party through a stormy night to a lonely house.

She is there.

Seeing Athos, Milady screamed.

What do you want?

We have come to judge you. D'Artagnan, it is for you to accuse her first.

I accuse this woman of having poisoned Constance Bonacieux!

I accuse her of having caused the death of the Duke of Buckingham!

I married this woman . . .gave her my name and my wealth. . .and one day discovered she was branded with the fleur-de-lis!

Milady is found guilty and sentenced by the musketeers.

You will never find any man who will carry out such a sentence.

I am that man!

The executioner of Lille!

The sentence was death. Tying Milady's hands, carrying his great sword, the executioner led her to a boat and rowed across the river. From the other bank, the musketeers saw his sword rise and fall.

I forgive you. . . die in peace.

Die in peace!

The musketeers returned to La Rochelle. There d'Artagnan was arrested and brought before the cardinal.

You are accused of crimes. . .for which you shall be tried.

I have my pardon in my pocket, cardinal, signed by yourself!

He gave the cardinal the note taken from Milady.

It is by my order and for the good of the State that the bearer of these shall do what he has done

3rd Dec.

Richelieu

You are a brave youth! From now on, I count you a friend! Here is a lieutenant's commission in the musketeers.

D'Artagnan hurried to find his friends.

Each of you is more worthy of the commission than I!

Keep it, my friend. No one deserves it more!

The war ended. One more time, the four friends met to give their toast.

ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL!

Then Porthos quit the musketeers to marry a rich widow Aramis entered a monastery, and Athos left the service to live on his country estate. D'Artagnan became a lieutenant and continued to serve bravely, and live adventurously.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandre Dumas, a French novelist and dramatist, was born in Villers-Cotterets in 1802. He received a basic education from a priest and entered the office of a local solicitor.

After he met General Foy, he became a clerk in the service of the Duke of Orleans. At that time he began to collaborate with Leuven in the production of vaudevilles and melodramas.

In 1844 he produced, with the help of Auguste Maquet, his new collaborator, a famous "cloak and dagger" romance, *The Three Musketeers*.

Much has been written about Dumas' share in the novels which bear his name. The Dumas-Maquet series is undoubtedly the best. But the manuscripts of novels still exist in Dumas' handwriting and attest to his skill as a narrator.

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